

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BOB ETHERIDGE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 6, 2001

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer a personal explanation. Yesterday, I was absent from the Chamber as I attended the funeral of Liston Ramsey, the late Speaker of the North Carolina House of Representatives. During that time, I was not present to vote on Roll Call Votes 333 and 334. Had I been present, I would have voted Yes on both. I ask that my statement be submitted in the appropriate place in the RECORD.

VERMONT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT
CONGRESSIONAL TOWN MEETING**HON. BERNARD SANDERS**

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 6, 2001

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize the outstanding work done by participants in my Student Congressional Town Meeting held this summer. These participants were part of a group of high school students from around Vermont who testified about the concerns they have as teenagers, and about what they would like to see government do regarding these concerns.

I am asking that these statements be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, as I believe that the views of these young persons will benefit my colleagues.

REGARDING THE MEDIA IN PUBLIC LIFE, MAY
7, 2001

APRIL LEICHTNAM: "There are two ways to slide through life; to believe everything or doubt everything. Both ways save us from thinking." Alfred Korzybski. The media plays an important role in the lives of all human beings. There are numerous different forms of media. Some of these forms are printouts such as newspapers, books, fliers, billboards, clothing, signs and magazines. Along with print media, there is nonprint media, such as television, radio, movies, cassette tapes, CDs, videotapes, Internet and other electronic modes of communication. When the media constructs the message they would like to convey, they have two things in mind. They have a purpose, and they design them to evoke a certain response from their audience.

LAURA DICK: The main purpose of the media is to inform people of the things around them, to persuade them into doing and buying things, to entertain them by showing them false images, and to sell products by not always telling what is true. Also, when constructing ads, the advertisers look to make the ad appealing to those who are seeing it. They use many different types of techniques. Some of these techniques include humor, comparisons, economics, social prestige, emotional appeal, appeal to fears and insecurities, statistics and studies, exotic appeals, a sense of belonging, a sense of mastery, a desire to be noticed, consumer com-

pliments, the use of parental figures, and also "weasel" words. Many of these techniques are designed to target a certain audience. Also, a lot of these claims on TV make ads meaningless. For example, an ad will say, "virtually spotless," instead of just "spotless," which does not mean the dishes will be totally spotless, but it makes one think they will be. Some other common advertising techniques include bandwagon, attraction, happy families, something-for-nothing, testimonials, "all natural," nostalgia, and patriotism. We ask have a statistic that shows the influence on media on the lives of many people today. For example:

APRIL LEICHTNAM: During one year, a child will see approximately 3,000 drinking episodes on television. The average American child will view approximately 75,000 beer ads by the age of 18. Alcohol advertising accounts for 3 to 5 percent of total revenue on TV, and 12 percent on radio. Prime time and soap operas expose teenagers to sexual scenes every nine minutes. Fewer than 6 percent of males and 2 percent of females on TV are obese, yet 25 to 45 percent of the American population is overweight, and two major health problems among teens are anorexia and bulimia. The average American watches 1,000 hours of television every year. In 1991, three out of four households owned a VCR. The average American sees about 32,000 commercials every year. In 1998, a 60-second commercial cost \$2,600,000 during the Super Bowl. The average American household owns two to three televisions. The average child views 10,000 murders, raps and aggravated assaults in one year. 20 to 28 hours per week are spent viewing television. This is the only activity we spend more time doing besides sleeping. Four out of five Americans believe violence on TV causes real violence. Beer commercials air while drinking portrayal occurs five times per hour. Average high school students spend two to three hours a day watching TV on school days, and eight hours a day on weekends. 90 million households own at least one TV set. 63 percent have two or more sets. By the first grade, the average child has seen 5,000 hours of TV. There are more people in the world who have televisions than indoor plumbing. In promoting things that are not reality, the media promotes such complex problems as drug addiction, crime, teen pregnancy, promiscuous sex, materialism, violence, racism, eating disorders, tobacco and alcohol consumption by teens and younger children, sexual and physical abuse, profanity, voter apathy, and pornography. Therefore, we conclude that media literacy classes should be offered in every high school in the state of Vermont.

REGARDING PUBLIC SCHOOLS, MAY 7, 2001

PATTY RALSTON: We have a video.

CONGRESSMAN SANDERS: You have a video?

PATTY RALSTON: Yes.

(Videotape played.)

CONGRESSMAN SANDERS: Thank you very much for that excellent video. Who wants to begin verbal presentation now? You don't think you are going to get away with just the video, do you? Just because you are TV stars does not exempt you from discussing it. Your name again?

SELENIA COGHLAN: Selenia Coghlan. Like I said on the video, I just feel that like—I'm not in public school right now, but I go to the Learning Edge. I'm getting my adult diploma. But when I was in the middle

school or public schools, I feel that, if you are on a different level than the other kids, like if you can't read as well or you can't do math as well, they treat you a lot differently. And, basically, I feel it is the teachers' fault, because they're there to educate you and they should be the ones to teach you, and when you get your diploma, it shouldn't be just because you got passed along. You should know something.

CONGRESSMAN SANDERS: Let me back you up here. I don't know that everybody knows. Why don't you guys say a few words about the Lund Home? How is the Lund Home different from other schools?

SELENIA COGHLAN: The Lund Home is for young parenting and pregnant teens. And is it a small class, where all females that are pregnant or parenting can get their diploma or GED. And they take math, history, everything that public schools take, and they also take parenting skills classes and like things that you need to know about parenting, or whatever. If you don't want to parent, what you could do, or if you want to parent, what you could do.

CONGRESSMAN SANDERS: Thank you. Next?

PATTY SALVAS: I never went to public schools in Vermont, but I do know that a lot of the public schools aren't very friendly to teen moms, and for like the people on welfare, they don't give them enough initiative. So they need to be more sympathetic towards them.

CONGRESSMAN SANDERS: Okay.

PATTY RALSTON: People shouldn't really, like just cause we had kids young and everything too, doesn't mean like—you know what I mean? Because I will make it, and whether anybody says I won't, I will.

CONGRESSMAN SANDERS: How many students are there at Lund?

PATTY RALSTON: We go to the Learning Edge. It is a different program, but there is like seven, eight—ten right now. Ten right now.

CONGRESSMAN SANDERS: And do you think the Learning Edge does things for young parenting moms that a public school often does not do?

PATTY RALSTON: Yes. They're helpful. And they're always there if you need like support or anything. They are there. You know they're there.

SELENIA COGHLAN: The other students that were talking before us, they said something, the other side—what is it called?

CONGRESSMAN SANDERS: Alternative.

SELENIA COGHLAN: Alternative schools. I think those are really great for kids. Some people do have problems maybe, with family, and that is why the are there, but some kids learn slower than other kids. Like me, I have to have somebody explain what I need, you know, like how to do it. Or if I just have a teacher in front of me saying, this, and there you go, I won't know anything, and then I won't do it.

CONGRESSMAN SANDERS: So you think different types of kids respond to different—

SELENIA COGHLAN: Everybody is different. I feel like everybody is different and everybody learns differently. There are kids that can learn things a lot quicker, and lots of people that can't. And I feel it is good to have alternatives for pregnant and parenting teens, and just for other kids that need the extra help, even if they are not pregnant or parenting.